

Dralle stars as Cougars nip IC West

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 27 August 2015 22:32 - Last Updated Friday, 28 August 2015 04:56



Tyler Dralle owes his offensive linemen at Kennedy a big steak dinner, but he's a guy on a budget and the Cougars might have to settle for something less fancy.

"Go to McDonald's or something. Maybe Pancheros. I don't know," Dralle said Thursday night with a smile. "I've got to reward them for something."

Dralle lugged the ball 40 times for 264 yards and four touchdowns as the ninth-ranked Cougars survived a brilliant passing attack by Iowa City West, 34-31, in a thriller at Kingston Stadium in the season opener.

Dalles Jacobus, one of Kennedy's beat-eaters on the offensive line, is ready to belly up and celebrate Dralle's big night.

"That's my bro," said Jacobus. "I'll be ready to eat anything, as long as it's free. We love the kid."

Kennedy need every one of those 264 yards from Dralle to get past the Trojans and their pass-happy combo of quarterback Alex Henderson and receiver Oliver Martin, who put on a show of their own. Henderson hit 20 of 30 passes for 357 yards and Martin, nearly unstoppable, made 12 grabs for 237 yards and two TDs.

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"I don't know if we're going to see too many receivers that are his caliber all year long," said Kennedy coach Brian White. "That guy is a dude."

The Cougars lost to Iowa City West in the season opener last year when the Trojans threw a long touchdown pass in the final minute. It looked like the Cougars might suffer a similar fate when the Trojans rallied from a 34-17 deficit and made it 34-31 on a pair of long TD throws from Henderson to Martin.

Iowa City West was on the march again and reached the Kennedy 30-yard line with three minutes left, but Henderson missed an open receiver in the end zone on fourth down and the Cougars took over on downs.

Dralle carried the ball seven straight times after that as the Cougars killed the clock and then rushed to the stands to celebrate the victory with the Kennedy student body.

Dralle appeared fresh as a daisy after the game, despite his heavy work load. "I feel good," he maintained. "It's a blessing running behind those five guys up front. We have the best line in the state."

Dralle matched the 11th-best rushing performance in Metro history. Andre Dawson of Washington also scooted for 264 yards in a game in 2009.



Kennedy featured a starting offensive line of Jackson Behn (6-3, 260), Jacobus (6-2, 260),

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Austin Kerska (6-1, 235), Mason Jacobs (6-1, 235) and Jackson Coker (6-4, 235). Elijah Feuerhelm (6-0, 225) also helped on the offensive line and Shaun Beyer (6-5, 210) moved people around at tight end.

"They're just my bulldozers," said Dralle. "They move everybody around for me."

White knows he can count on Dralle to keep pounding away.

"The funny thing is, last night at our team dinner I looked at him and said, 'Dralle, are you ready to carry the ball 35 times?' And he goes, 'Absolutely,'" the coach remarked.

"I never dreamed I'd give it to him 35 times tonight, but if it's working and you're getting the job done, why veer away from it? Maybe that's who we are: A good offensive line with a rugged tailback like Tyler Dralle."

The Cougars ran the ball 50 times for 326 yards.

"It was great," said Jacobus. "I love going out there with my brothers and keeping the hype the whole time. It was awesome."

White was proud of the way his offensive line controlled the line of scrimmage. The Cougars are fairly big up front, but not huge by today's standards.

"But there's not much fat on them," he said. "They're very strong kids and very powerful. They spend a lot of time in the weight room, and they can all run. They're very athletic."

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"We've got a little lead in our pencil to move people around. When you have that nucleus of kids up front, it's hard not to run the ball."

Kennedy began the 2014 campaign with six straight losses, but the Cougars were able to erase that memory Thursday night. "It feels so good to get the first one out of the way early instead of waiting," said Dralle.

Junior quarterback Nicholas Duehr did a good job of running the Cougars in his first start for the varsity. He hit 8 of 11 passes for 96 yards, with an 11-yard touchdown to Beyer, and ran the ball six times for 48 yards.

Kennedy faces Washington next Friday night at Kingston.

KENNEDY 34, IOWA CITY WEST 31

West □ Kennedy

First downs	22	25
Rushes-yards	30-87	50-326
Passing yards	357	130
Comp-Att-Int	20-30-1	9-12-0
Fumbles-lost	1-0	1-1
Punts-avg.	2-37.5	0-0
Penalties-yards	10-83	3-30

IC West □ 7 □ □ 7 □ 10 □ 7 - 31

Kennedy □ 0 □ 20 □ 14 □ 0 - 34

W - Devontae Lane 21 pass from Alex Henderson (Will Peterson kick)

K - Shaun Beyer 11 pass from Nicholas Duehr (Alexander Stone kick)

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W - Mason Koch 1 run (Peterson kick)

K - Tyler Dralle 10 run (kick failed)

K - Dralle 7 run (Stone kick)

K - Dralle 1 run (Stone kick)

W - Peterson 35 FG

K - Dralle 2 run (Stone kick)

W - Oliver Martin 35 pass from Henderson (Peterson kick)

W - Martin 25 pass from Henderson (Peterson kick)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Iowa City West - Henderson 10-62, Hicks 14-19, Huff 3-11, Koch 1-1, Martin 2-minus 6.
Kennedy - Dralle 40-264, Duehr 6-48, Berry 1-10, Beyer 1-4, Parks 2-0.

Passing

West - Henderson 20-30-0, 357.

Kennedy - Duehr 8-11-0, 96; Kadolph 1-1-0, 34.

Receiving

West - Martin 12-237, Lane 5-84, Adcock 2-20, Majors 1-16.

Kennedy - Beyer 3-58, Coates 2-46, DeMaris 2-15, Berry 1-8, Baker 1-3.